

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Wednesday, March 10

House Bill 6578: An Act Concerning Participation in the Electoral Process - Support

Senate Bill 1017: An Act Concerning Election Administration - Support

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox, Senator Sampson, Representative Mastrofrancesco, and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee:

My name is Stephen Anderson and I am the President of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union which represents thousands of state, municipal, and private sector workers, as well as over 11,500 retirees. I offer the following testimony on their behalf in support of House Bill 6578 and Senate Bill 1017.

The United States of America has the longest-standing democracy in the world; something that has long been a source of pride for our nation. But what does that matter when we erect barriers to participating in that democracy? Through struggle and challenge, and far too slowly, the United States has expanded and enhanced the right to vote throughout our history. Nothing will erase the shame of slavery or of denying voting rights to women, but ensuring that every American citizen who is over the age of 18 can cast a ballot free from intimidation and regardless of their race, creed, ethnicity, gender, religion, or sexual orientation has, until recently, been a common goal shared across the political spectrum.

HB 6578 and SB 1017 are important steps towards building an election system in Connecticut that rests on a foundation of fairness and equity. The attacks on voting our country has witnessed over the past several years, from lies told about voter fraud to legislation designed to disenfranchise voters of color, are not just attacks on a specific political party or partisan group, they are an assault on the idea of government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Whether it is expanding Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) beyond the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to other state agencies or restoring the right to vote for people re-entering their communities on parole, HB 6578 puts voters and our communities first. As so many states, unfortunately, seek to curb their residents' right to have a say in their government through voting, Connecticut has the opportunity to move in the opposite direction.

The ballot drop boxes used by voters during the 2020 elections were a welcome addition to the voting options available to Connecticut residents, even in the midst of the ongoing and deadly pandemic. Senate Bill 1017 recognizes their usefulness while also making additional positive changes that will streamline and improve elections in Connecticut.

I urge the committee to support HB 6578 and SB 1017.

Stephen Anderson
President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001